

(i) If the State fails to submit status reports in accordance with §1355.35(d)(4), or if such reports indicate that the State is not making satisfactory progress toward achieving goals or actions steps, funds will be withheld at that time for a period beginning October 1 of the fiscal year for which the determination of nonconformity was made and ending on the specified completion date for the affected goal or action step.

(ii) Funds related to goals and action steps that have not been achieved by the specified completion date will be withheld at that time for a period beginning October 1 of the fiscal year for which the determination of nonconformity was made and ending on the completion date of the affected goal or action step; and

(iii) The withholding of funds commensurate with the level of nonconformity at the end of the program improvement plan will begin at the latest completion date specified in the program improvement plan and will continue until a subsequent full review determines the State to be in substantial conformity or the State successfully completes a program improvement plan developed as a result of that subsequent full review.

(3) When the date the State is determined to be in substantial conformity or to have successfully completed a program improvement plan falls within a specific quarter, the amount of funds to be withheld will be computed to the end of that quarter.

(4) A State agency that refuses to participate in the development or implementation of a program improvement plan, as required by ACF, will be subject to the maximum increased withholding of 42 percent of its title IV-B and title IV-E funds, as described in paragraph (b)(8) of this section, for each year or portion thereof to which the withholding of funds applies.

(5) The State agency will be liable for interest on the amount of funds withheld by the Department, in accordance with the provisions of 45 CFR 30.13.

[65 FR 4081, Jan. 25, 2000, as amended at 66 FR 58675, Nov. 23, 2001]

§ 1355.37 Opportunity for Public Inspection of Review Reports and Materials.

The State agency must make available for public review and inspection all statewide assessments (§1355.33(b)), report of findings (§1355.33(e)), and program improvement plans (§1355.35(a)) developed as a result of a full or partial child and family services review.

[65 FR 4082, Jan. 25, 2000]

§ 1355.38 Enforcement of section 471(a)(18) of the Act regarding the removal of barriers to interethnic adoption.

(a) *Determination that a violation has occurred in the absence of a court finding.*

(1) If ACF becomes aware of a possible section 471(a)(18) violation, whether in the course of a child and family services review, the filing of a complaint, or through some other mechanism, it will refer such a case to the Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) for investigation.

(2) Based on the findings of the OCR investigation, ACF will determine if a violation of section 471(a)(18) has occurred. A section 471(a)(18) violation occurs if a State or an entity in the State:

(i) Has denied to any person the opportunity to become an adoptive or foster parent on the basis of the race, color, or national origin of the person, or of the child, involved;

(ii) Has delayed or denied the placement of a child for adoption or into foster care on the basis of the race, color, or national origin of the adoptive or foster parent, or the child involved; or,

(iii) With respect to a State, maintains any statute, regulation, policy, procedure, or practice that on its face, is a violation as defined in paragraphs (a)(2)(i) and (2)(ii) of this section.

(3) ACF will provide the State or entity with written notification of its determination.

(4) If there has been no violation, there will be no further action. If ACF determines that there has been a violation of section 471(a)(18), it will take enforcement action as described in this section.

(5) Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95-608) does

not constitute a violation of section 471(a)(18).

(b) *Corrective action and penalties for violations with respect to a person or based on a court finding.* (1) A State or entity found to be in violation of section 471(a)(18) of the Act with respect to a person, as described in paragraphs (a)(2)(i) and (a)(2)(ii) of this section, will be penalized in accordance with paragraph (g)(2) of this section. A State or entity determined to be in violation of section 471(a)(18) of the Act as a result of a court finding will be penalized in accordance with paragraph (g)(4) of this section. The State may develop, obtain approval of, and implement a plan of corrective action any time after it receives written notification from ACF that it is in violation of section 471(a)(18) of the Act.

(2) Corrective action plans are subject to ACF approval.

(3) If the corrective action plan does not meet the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section, the State must revise and resubmit the plan for approval until it has an approved plan.

(4) A State or entity found to be in violation of section 471(a)(18) of the Act by a court must notify ACF within 30 days from the date of entry of the final judgement once all appeals have been exhausted, declined, or the appeal period has expired.

(c) *Corrective action for violations resulting from a State's statute, regulation, policy, procedure, or practice.* (1) A State found to have committed a violation of the type described in paragraph (a)(2)(iii) of this section must develop and submit a corrective action plan within 30 days of receiving written notification from ACF that it is in violation of section 471(a)(18). Once the plan is approved the State will have to complete the corrective action and come into compliance. If the State fails to complete the corrective action plan within six months and come into compliance, a penalty will be imposed in accordance with paragraph (g)(3) of this section.

(2) Corrective action plans are subject to ACF approval.

(3) If the corrective action plan does not meet the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section, the State must revise and resubmit the plan within 30

days from the date it receives a written notice from ACF that the plan has not been approved. If the State does not submit a revised corrective action plan according to the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section, withholding of funds pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (g) of this section will apply.

(d) *Contents of a corrective action plan.* A corrective action plan must:

(1) Identify the issues to be addressed;

(2) Set forth the steps for taking corrective action;

(3) Identify any technical assistance needs and Federal and non-Federal sources of technical assistance which will be used to complete the action steps; and,

(4) Specify the completion date. This date will be no later than 6 months from the date ACF approves the corrective action plan.

(e) *Evaluation of corrective action plans.* ACF will evaluate corrective action plans and notify the State (in writing) of its success or failure to complete the plan within 30 calendar days. If the State has failed to complete the corrective action plan, ACF will calculate the amount of reduction in the State's title IV-E payment and include this information in the written notification of failure to complete the plan.

(f) *Funds to be withheld.* The term "title IV-E funds" refers to the amount of Federal funds advanced or paid to the State for allowable costs incurred by a State for: foster care maintenance payments, adoption assistance payments, administrative costs, and training costs under title IV-E and includes the State's allotment for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program under section 477 of the Act.

(g) *Reduction of title IV-E funds.* (1) Title IV-E funds shall be reduced in specified amounts in accordance with paragraph (h) of this section under the following circumstances:

(i) A determination that a State or entity is in violation of section 471(a)(18) of the Act with respect to a person as described in paragraphs (a)(2)(i) and (a)(2)(ii) of this section, or:

(ii) After a State's failure to implement and complete a corrective action

plan and come into compliance as described in paragraph (c) of this section.

(2) Once ACF notifies a State (in writing) that it has committed a section 471(a)(18) violation with respect to a person, the State's title IV-E funds will be reduced for the fiscal quarter in which the State received written notification and for each succeeding quarter within that fiscal year or until the State completes a corrective action plan and comes into compliance, whichever is earlier. Once ACF notifies an entity (in writing) that it has committed a section 471(a)(18) violation with respect to a person, the entity must remit to the Secretary all title IV-E funds paid to it by the State during the quarter in which the entity is notified of the violation.

(3) For States that fail to complete a corrective action plan within 6 months, title IV-E funds will be reduced by ACF for the fiscal quarter in which the State received notification of its violation. The reduction will continue for each succeeding quarter within that fiscal year or until the State completes the corrective action plan and comes into compliance, whichever is earlier.

(4) If, as a result of a court finding, a State or entity is determined to be in violation of section 471(a)(18) of the Act, ACF will assess a penalty without further investigation. Once the State is notified (in writing) of the violation, its title IV-E funds will be reduced for the fiscal quarter in which the court finding was made and for each succeeding quarter within that fiscal year or until the State completes a corrective action plan and comes into compliance, whichever is sooner. Once an entity is notified (in writing) of the violation, the entity must remit to the Secretary all title IV-E funds paid to it by the State during the quarter in which the court finding was made.

(5) The maximum number of quarters that a State will have its title IV-E funds reduced due to a finding of a State's failure to conform to section 471(a)(18) of the Act is limited to the number of quarters within the fiscal year in which a determination of nonconformity was made. However, an uncorrected violation may result in a subsequent review, another finding, and additional penalties.

(6) No penalty will be imposed for a court finding of a violation of section 471(a)(18) until the judgement is final and all appeals have been exhausted, declined, or the appeal period has expired.

(h) *Determination of the amount of reduction of Federal funds.* ACF will determine the reduction in title IV-E funds due to a section 471(a)(18) violation in accordance with section 474(d)(1) and (2) of the Act.

(1) State agencies that violate section 471(a)(18) with respect to a person or fail to implement or complete a corrective action plan as described in paragraph (c) of this section will be subject to a penalty. The penalty structure will follow section 474(d)(1) of the Act. Penalties will be levied for the quarter of the fiscal year in which the State is notified of its section 471(a)(18) violation, and for each succeeding quarter within that fiscal year until the State comes into compliance with section 471(a)(18). The reduction in title IV-E funds will be computed as follows:

(i) 2 percent of the State's title IV-E funds for the fiscal year quarter, as defined in paragraph (f) of this section, for the first finding of noncompliance in that fiscal year;

(ii) 3 percent of the State's title IV-E funds for the fiscal year quarter, as defined in paragraph (f) of this section, for the second finding of noncompliance in that fiscal year;

(iii) 5 percent of the State's title IV-E funds for the fiscal year quarter, as defined in paragraph (f) of this section, for the third or subsequent finding of noncompliance in that fiscal year.

(2) Any entity (other than the State agency) which violates section 471(a)(18) of the Act during a fiscal quarter must remit to the Secretary all title IV-E funds paid to it by the State in accordance with the procedures in paragraphs (g)(2) or (g)(4) of this section.

(3) No fiscal year payment to a State will be reduced by more than 5 percent of its title IV-E funds, as defined in paragraph (f) of this section, where the State has been determined to be out of compliance with section 471(a)(18) of the Act.

(4) The State agency or entity, as applicable, will be liable for interest on

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the amount of funds reduced by the Department, in accordance with the provisions of 45 CFR 30.13.

[65 FR 4082, Jan. 25, 2000, as amended at 66 FR 58676, Nov. 23, 2001]

§ 1355.39 Administrative and judicial review.

States determined not to be in substantial conformity with titles IV-B and IV-E State plan requirements, or a State or entity in violation of section 471(a)(18) of the Act:

(a) May appeal, pursuant to 45 CFR part 16, the final determination and any subsequent withholding of, or reduction in, funds to the HHS Departmental Appeals Board within 60 days after receipt of a notice of nonconformity described in §1355.36(e)(1) of this part, or receipt of a notice of non-compliance by ACF as described in §1355.38(a)(3) of this part; and

(b) Will have the opportunity to obtain judicial review of an adverse decision of the Departmental Appeals Board within 60 days after the State or entity receives notice of the decision by the Board. Appeals of adverse Department Appeals Board decisions must be made to the district court of the United States for the judicial district in which the principal or headquarters office of the agency responsible for administering the program is located.

(c) The procedure described in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section will not apply to a finding that a State or entity has been determined to be in violation of section 471(a)(18) which is based on a judicial decision.

[65 FR 4083, Jan. 25, 2000]

§ 1355.40 Foster care and adoption data collection.

(a) *Scope of the data collection system.*

(1) Each State which administers or supervises the administration of titles IV-B and IV-E must implement a system that begins to collect data on October 1, 1994. The first transmission must be received in ACF no later than May 15, 1995. The data reporting system must meet the requirements of §1355.40(b) and electronically report certain data regarding children in foster care and adoption. The foster care

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data elements are listed and defined in Appendix A to this part and the adoption data elements are listed and defined in Appendix B to this part.

(2) For the purposes of foster care reporting, each State's data transmission must include all children in foster care for whom the State title IV-B/IV-E agency has responsibility for placement, care, or supervision. This includes American Indian children covered under the assurances in section 422(b)(10) of the Act on the same basis as any other child. For children in care less than 30 days, only a core set of information will be required, as noted in appendix A to this part. For children who enter foster care prior to October 1, 1995 and who are still in the system, core data elements will be required; in addition, States will also be required to report on the most recent case plan goal affecting those children. For children in out-of-State placement, the State placing the child and making the foster care payment submits and continually updates the data.

(3) For the purposes of adoption reporting, data are required to be transmitted by the State on all adopted children who were placed by the State title IV-B/IV-E agency, and on all adopted children for whom the State agency is providing adoption assistance (either ongoing or for nonrecurring expenses), care or services directly or by contract or agreement with other private or public agencies. Full adoption data as specified in appendix B to this part are required only for children adopted after the implementation date of October 1, 1994. For children adopted prior to October 1, 1994, who are continuing to receive title IV-E subsidies, aggregate data are to be reported. For a child adopted out-of-State, the State which placed the child submits the data.

(b) *Foster care and adoption reporting requirements.* (1) The State agency shall transmit semi-annually, within 45 days of the end of the reporting period (i.e., by May 15 and November 14), information on each child in foster care and each child adopted during the reporting period. The information to be reported consists of the data elements found in appendices A and B to this part. The data must be extracted from the data